

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SY-05 MCT-01 EB-08

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P R 020836Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7831

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 8252

VICTORIA FOR AMBASSADOR LE MELLE

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE, UG

SUBJECT: PROMINENT WHITE KENYAN ASSASSINATED

1. SUMMARY: A PIPER AZTEC AIRCRAFT CARRYING BRUCE MCKENZIE,

THE ONLY WHITE EVER TO SERVE IN KENYA'S POST-INDEPENDENCE CABINET, EXPLODED MAY 24 SHORTLY BEFORE LANDING AT NAIROBI'S WILSON AIRPORT KILLING PILOT AND ALL THREE PASSENGERS. PLANE WAS EN ROUTE FROM ENTEBBE AIRPORT, UGANDA. KENYAN POLICE BELIEVE EXPLOSION WAS CAUSED BY BOMB PLACED ABOARD AIRCRAFT WHILE IN UGANDA. SINCE HIS RESIGNATION FROM CABINET, MCKENZIE HAD REMAINED INTIMATE FRIEND AND ASSOCIATE OF THE TOP-LEVEL GOK LEADERS. ON MAY 26 KENYA MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FORMALLY REQUESTED UGANDAN COUNTERPART TO INVESTIGATE INCIDENT AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION, BUT TO DATE UGANDAN REPLIES HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO KAMPALA RADIO DOMESTIC SERVICE DENIALS THAT BOMB HAD BEEN PLACED IN AIRCRAFT PRIOR TO TAKE OFF. THEORIES  
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ABOUND AS TO MOTIVE BEHIND KILLING. TRUE STORY MAY NEVER BE KNOWN BUT GOOD POSSIBILITY WAS SETTLING OF SCORE RESULTING FROM NUMEROUS SHADY BUSINESS DEALINGS. UNLESS UGANDANS COOPERATE FULLY IN INVESTIGATION, HOWEVER, (AN UNLIKELY PROSPECT) INCIDENT IS LIKELY TO PUT ADDITIONAL STRAIN ON BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. FURTHERMORE, MCKENZIE WAS IMPORTANT ADVISOR TO AND FINANCIAL BACKER OF VP MOI/

ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO POLITICAL GROUP. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT WITH HIS LOSS GROUP MAY LOSE SOME OF ITS COHESIVENESS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MANY RESPECTS BRUCE MCKENZIE WAS UNIQUE IN KENYA. AN EARLY SUPPORTER OF KENYAN INDEPENDENCE, HE WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE ON INDEPENDENCE IN 1963 AND PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY UNDER WHICH LAND IN ESTWHILE WHITE HIGHLANDS WAS PURCHASED FROM SETTLERS AND TURNED OVER TO AFRICANS. THE

ONLY WHITE IN CABINET, HE WAS CLOSE TO PRESIDENT KENYATTA, AND AN INTIMATE FRIEND OF ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO, MINISTER OF HEALTH OSOGO, MINISTER OF WATER DEVELOPMENT KIANO, AND CIVILL SERVICE HEAD GEOFFREY KARIITHI. IN LATER YEARS HE DEVELOPED CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH VP MOI AND MINISTER OF FINANCE KIBAKI.

3. AFTER RESIGNATION FROM CABINET, MCKENZIE BECAME INVOLVED IN WIDE VARIETY BUSINESSES AND BUSINESS DEALS HERE, IN UK, AND ELSEWHERE. AT HIS DEATH HE OWNED PROSPEROUS VOLKSWAGEN DEALERSHIPS IN EAST AFRICA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NJONJO. HE IS REPUTED TO HAVE BEEN MIDDLE-MAN ON PURCHASE OF VICKERS TANK BY KENYA IN LATE 1976. MORE RECENTLY, HE IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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MASTERMIND BEHIND OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED UGANDAN COFFEE SMUGGLING RACKET FROM WHICH HIS KENYAN AND UGANDAN FRIENDS BENEFITTED ENORMOUSLY.

4. IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR PRECISELY WHY MCKENZIE AND PARTY WERE IN UGANDA ON MAY 24, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND HE WAS SUMMONED BY PRESIDENT AMIN. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION SOURCE BELIEVES IT MAY HAVE BEEN IN CONNECTION WITH COFFEE SMUGGLING RACKET, THE NATURE OF WHICH HAS CHANGED AS RESULT OF FALLING WORLD COFFEE PRICES OVER PAST YEAR. ON OTHER HAND, ANOTHER PASSENGER ON PLANE WAS GAVIN WHITELAW, A REPRESENTATIVE OF VICKERS. THIS HAS LED TO SPECULATION THAT TRIP WAS IN CONNECTION WITH POSSIBLE MAJOR BRITISH ARMS SALE TO AMIN REGIME WHICH MCKENZIE WAS ORGANIZING.

5. CONCEIVABLY, MCKENZIE WAS ONLY CIRCUMSTANTIAL VICTIM OF ASSASSINATION. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM GOOD SOURCE THAT A THIRD PASSENGER ON PLANE, KEITH SAVAGE, WAS TARGET OF UNSUCCESSFUL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN NAIROBI FEW WEEKS AGO. SAVAGE IS DIRECTOR OF SEVERAL NAIROBI BASED COMPANIES ASSOCIATED WITH MCKENZIE. HE IS KNOWN

TO HAVE MADE GREAT NUMBER OF ENEMIES HERE OVER YEARS  
DUE TO ALLEGEDLY HEEVY-HANDED AND DIRTY BUSINESS  
TACTICS.

6. KENYAN POLICE INVESTIGATIONS HAVE APPARENTLY  
ESTABLISHED THAT BOMBING WAS CARRIED OUT IN PROFESSIONAL  
MANNERUTILIZING TIMING DEVICE. GOK IS TOTALLY UN-  
PERSUADED BY UGANDAN RADIO ASSERTIONS THAT MAXIMUM  
SECURITY EXISTS AT ENTEBBE AIRPORT AND THAT NO DEVICE  
COULD HAVE BEEN PLANTED AT AIRPORT WHILE THERE. WHILE  
NO ONE HERE KNOWS FOR SURE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE, THERE  
ARE LURKING SUSPECION THAT BOMBING MAY HAVE BEEN ORDERED  
BY AMIN HIMSELF OR BY BOB ASTLES, HIS TOP ASSOCIATE FOR  
AS YET UNKNOWN REASON. UNLESS THIS SUSPICION IS DISPELLED  
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IT IS BOUND TO EFFECT RELATIONS WITH GOK WHICH INCLUDES  
SO MANY OF MCKENZIE'S FRIENDS.

7. MCKENZIE'S DEATH COULD HAVE DOMESTIC POLITICAL  
REPERCUSSIONS. MCKENZIE WAS A CONSUMMATE PROMOTER. HE  
HAD HIS FINGERS IN A WIDE ASSORTMENT OF DESKS IN WHICH  
MANY GOVERNMENT TOPSIDERS COOPERATED AND FROM WHICH THEY  
PROFITED. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THESE DEALS MORE  
THAN ANYTHING ELSE HAVE KEPT THE MOI/NJONJO GROUP  
TOGETHER. UNLESS SOMEONE WITH KCKENZIE'S INTERNATIONAL  
FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS CONNECTIONS FILLS THE VACUUM,  
THESE RELATIONSHIPS MAY WELL SUFFER OVER TIME.  
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## Message Attributes

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